

there for you

supporting UNISON members
when life gets tough

UNISON There for You recognises the challenges we are all facing during these worrying and uncertain times. We have been in a state of lockdown for over a year, most of us have been separated from friends and family, some of us are spending more time at home with family than ever, some of us are alone, some of us may have had to cope with home-schooling, some of us are caring for relatives and loved ones. There is no one size fits all circumstances, and we recognise that the ongoing pandemic situation has taken its toll on all of us in many different ways. If you are finding things tough, you are not alone.

We have put together this guide which is intended to help you recognise the signs that you might be struggling, and to give you a space to explore and record the things that you can do to make you feel better.

We recognise that everyone is different and that these approaches are just suggestions – what works for one may not work for another. For information about other ways UNISON's charity can help during these difficult times go to <https://www.unison.org.uk/get-help/services-support/there-for-you/>



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UNISON
the public service union

My guide to better well-being

Signs that I might be struggling

The best way to know when you might be struggling is to know the signs. If you notice them, you can then take action to help yourself feel better.

Below are some common signs that people often feel when struggling. There's space beneath for you to add any of your personal experiences too.

- Racing thoughts and constant worrying.
- Difficulty concentrating and making decisions.
- Feeling irritable, fearful or overwhelmed.
- Low self-esteem and thinking you're not capable.
- Feeling tired or having sleep problems.
- Avoiding people or situations.
- Headaches, dizziness or muscle pain.
- Not wanting to do things you usually enjoy.

5 ways to better well-being

1. Take Notice

Taking some time to stop and think about the here and now; how we are feeling or thinking.

- Notice your feelings
- Connect with your senses through mindfulness and try a mindfulness app
- Consider speaking to a friend or family member
- Access support services or online help

2. Connect

Spending time speaking with others, where possible, improves our sense of belonging and can make us feel good.

- Consider reaching out to friends or a family member
- Organise a video call, perhaps with a quiz or an activity
- Listen to what your body and mind need

3. Be Active

This isn't all about levels of fitness, it can help you feel good too.

- Eat well e.g. drink water and get your 5 fruit or veg a day
- Consider exercising – take a walk, go for a run, or try an online class
- Explore the possibility of an outdoor gym
- Look after your sleep

4. Be Creative

Make time to play and be creative! This can help you feel good about yourself.

- Try to set time aside in your day to spend time reading a new book
- Listen to the radio
- Photography on your phone
- Try baking!

5. Keep Learning

When you keep learning or trying new things, it can give you a sense of achievement and boost your confidence.

- Cook a healthy meal
- Consider learning a new sport or activity
- Create a new personal goal
- Keep learning about yourself and your needs



Things that make me feel better

Click in the boxes below to add a list of the things that you would like to do, to help you to focus on feeling better.



If I need to talk to **someone** who I know will listen, I can always rely on:



Enjoyable hobbies and activities can include spending time **reading, drawing** or **photography**. I really enjoy spending time:



Music or a good **TV show** can really chill me out or give me a boost. My favourites are:



If I need to have **some fun**, relax and have a laugh, I can speak to:



Being in nature can be really relaxing. Some like jogging through a **park** or taking a walk down a quiet **lane**. I really like:



I really admire people **learning new skills** like playing an instrument or learning a language. I really want to:



Getting the **heart going** is a great way to feel alive, whether it's football, running or yoga. I like to:

If my working day is becoming a **challenge**, I can:

Finding support

Anxiety UK

<https://www.anxietyuk.org.uk/>

Containing information and tools to manage anxiety, this charity also has a specific section about anxiety and coronavirus.

Mind

<https://www.mind.org.uk/>

This site contains a host of information and advice about all mental health issues.

Mental Health Foundation

<https://www.mentalhealth.org.uk/>

There's lots of content to be found on this website to support your wellbeing.

Rethink mental illness

<https://www.rethink.org.uk>

This site has lots of useful information on mental health as well as content specifically around coronavirus and mental health.

HELPLINES:

CALM (Campaign Against Living Miserably)

0800 58 58

Open 5pm to Midnight every day you can contact their helpline or use the online chat facility

<https://www.thecalmzone.net/help/get-help/>

Mindline Trans+

0300 330 5468

Is an emotional and mental health support helpline for anyone identifying as transgender, non-binary, genderfluid.

<https://mindlinetrans.org.uk/>

Papyrus

HOPELINEUK 0800 068 4141

For those who are under 35 and struggling with suicidal feelings, Papyrus is available from 9am to midnight every day of the year.

Samaritans

Whatever you're going through, a Samaritan will face it with you. 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.

116 123

SANEline

0300 304 7000

SANEline is a national out-of-hours mental health helpline offering specialist emotional support, guidance and information to anyone affected by mental illness, including family, friends and carers. We are open every day of the year from 4.30pm to 10.30pm

www.sane.org.uk

Switchboard

0300 330 0630

For people who identify as gay, lesbian, bisexual or transgender, the Switchboard helpline is open 10am-10pm every day.

The Mix

0808 808 4994

The Mix is the UK's leading support service for young people. Talk to The Mix via their online community, on social, through our free, confidential helpline or our counselling service

<https://www.themix.org.uk/>

NATIONAL HELPLINES:

England - Mental Health Helpline for Urgent Help

For 24-hour advice and support speak to a mental health professional. To find your local NHS helpline go to

<https://www.nhs.uk/service-search/mental-health/find-an-urgent-mental-health-helpline>

Northern Ireland -

0808 808 8000

Lifeline is a crisis response helpline available to everyone in Northern Ireland. There is immediate help by telephone at any time every day, if you're in distress or despair or someone you know is. Available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Scotland -

Breathing Space 0800 83 85 87

A free confidential service for people in Scotland experiencing low mood, depression or anxiety

<https://breathingspace.scot/>

Wales -

0800 132 737

The Mental Health Helpline service is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days of the year

<https://www.callhelpline.org.uk/>